1976

TOWN COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

Your Council has averaged three meetings each month, with eight in June to review in depth the 1976-77 Fiscal Year Budget. The others were called to discuss the newly revised Subdivision Ordinances as submitted by Staff, the Rossi fire and replacement of the Town Planner. Some of the more important items considered by Council in the past five months are:

ADZA PARK is now complete and makes a lovely addition to one of the main entrances of our Town at the corner of Edith & Fremont. Pathways wind through the landscape and a sprinkler system underground sustains the plants. A bench constructed from an old fallen tree offers momentary rest or a quiet spot to simply enjoy nature.

WESTWIND FARM: After some months of deliberation, the 15 member Ad Hoc Committee chaired by Steve McReynolds filed their report with the recommendation that the Town take action on one of three alternatives: use the barn as a horse facility, sell the barn or raze it and retain the land as open space. The question also was reviewed by the Planning Commission who recommended to Council that the property be used as a horse facility if economically feasible. Council then requested Staff to develop guidelines and conditions for soliciting proposals from interested parties willing to operate the barn. Some 10 responses were received. A committee of 5 was appointed to interview the prospective lessees. Financial reports and personal references were obtained on the "semi-finalists", and Council has

LITTLE LEAGUE parents were given an assist by Council who voted $12,500 to help upgrade the parking facilities, install a fence along Purissima, place an arterial stop sign and accompanying "stop ahead" signs to minimize the safety hazard. The need for greater safety is more pronounced now that the newly formed girls league is active, making this area more popular than ever. Parents of Little League are seeking additional voluntary contributions to enable completion of other improvements.

MID-PENINSULA PARK DISTRICT is looked upon with disfavor by the present Council, who voted to request LAFCO (Local Agency Formation Commission) for permission to secede from the District. This action was taken partly on the grounds that Los Altos Hills has actively pursued an Open Space plan which over the years has resulted in Town acquisition of 116 acres - with another 4 acres to be purchased during the current fiscal year. This is far in excess of State requirements. Council also pointed out that since both the Town and County have open space programs (not to mention State and National acquisitions), another governmental layer duplicating these efforts is unnecessary and unnecessarily drains more tax monies from the Town. Besides the Town's open space acreage - plus the open space resulting from our one acre minimum zoning - our Town is already surrounded on our southern and western borders with over 3,000 acres permanently committed to open space. Further, Council is advised that Mid-Peninsula Regional Park District can condemn property within the Town for open space purposes; because their powers are broad a potential danger is posed - threatening the Town's zoning - should the District acquire land within Town and later sell that property to another governmental agency who can then make use of that land in almost any manner they should see fit: and the Town would be helpless.

It is Council's intent that the subject ultimately be place before the electorate for the majority of voters to decide. The cities of Atherton, Redwood City, San Carlos and Sunnyvale have under consideration similar thoughts.

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COMMENTS BEFORE COUNCIL: Recently Council established a policy whereby those members of the public requesting their statements be read into the record will be permitted to do so. Preferably a written statement should be given the City Clerk to assure accuracy. In all other cases the minutes will reflect only whether a person spoke for or against an item.

TOWN HISTORIAN: Florence Fava's resignation as Town Historian was accepted by Council last June. The Los Altos Hills Historical Society has graciously volunteered to fill the void.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE: In a recent action, Council established a Legislative Review Committee charged with studying and advising state legislators on those items directly affecting the Town. Councilman Brown, Councilwoman Hillestad and three residents (as yet to be appointed) comprise the new committee. Residents interested in legislative matters are urged to contact Town Hall.

SEWER ASSESSMENT DISTRICT #9: After several years of litigation the Town won what appears to be the last legal step which clears the way for completion of administrative and financial action. SAD #9 was established by Council in 1972 to help finance 1968 agreements with the City of Palo Alto; however, the sale of bonds was prevented until the recent California Supreme Court decision.

NEW CITY CLERK AND CITY TREASURER: In addition to her duties as administative secretary, Norma Hislop has been officially appointed City Clerk. She was formerly Asst. City Clerk. At the same time, Pearl Cory was appointed City Treasurer.

REWARDS AGAINST VANDALISM: At a special meeting Council approved posting a $5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of person(s) responsible for burning the Rossi home. Other citizens matched this amount, bringing the total award to $15,000.

The Town has historically posted a reward of $500 for information on person(s) defacing or removing Town street signs. There is also a $100 reward leading to the arrest of vandalism to mail boxes. All such information should be directed to the County Sheriff's Department & to the City Manager.

COUNCILMEN EXONERATED: Councilman Brown, and Councilwoman Hillestad and Mrs. Pat Standring were cleared by the City Attorney of alleged charges pertaining to improprieties concerning the Fair Political Practices Act. The City Attorney's investigation revealed "there was no basis for concern."

POLICE PROTECTION: The Sheriff's Patrol Services contract for the next year resulted in 8.67% increase while maintaining the same level of service. In another action, Security Patrolman Gordon Penfold was upgraded to the level of Police Reserve with all the powers of a peace officer in addition to his other duties.

PINEWOOD SCHOOL: Fremont Hills School has been leased by PAUSD to a private school. City Council approved, with certain conditions, a Conditional Use Permit to Pinewood School. School evening events are limited to one per month; otherwise "the school grounds are open to the general public during non-instructional hours, and the facilities shall continue to remain open to organized groups."

TOWN PLANNER RESIGNS: Ken Pastroff has resigned as Town Planner for personal reasons after two years of very successful and innovative work for the Town. Council and other Staff members expressed regret, but wished Ken good luck with his future plans. It was agreed that, looking forward to the eventual retirement of the City Engineer, the Town will seek as replacement the selection of a person with a degree as Civil Enginger and some experience as a Planner.

TOWN BUDGET & PROPERTY TAXES

City Council approved the 1976-77 Fiscal Year Budget of $485,926 operating expenses and $176,165 capital costs. From the unappropriated General Fund $20,000 was added to a Special Reserve which now totals $130,000. City employees were granted and 8% salary increase, with the City Manager receiving and 8.5% increase.

The Town property tax base remained the same, at .35¢ per hundred dollar valuation. Most Council members would have liked to reduce the tax; however some or all of the following reasons persuaded Council to maintain the same tax base:

1. Federal Revenue sharing expires Dec. 31, 1976. Extention probably will be approved, but no one knows at what lever of funding: it may by the same, but it could be less.
2. Senate Constitutional Amendment #47, being considered in Sacramento, would limit family homeowners' tax to not exceed 5% per year. This concept is gaining support and if ever approved could place cities having a weak financial base in a nebulous position.
3. There is legislative talk of freezing city tax at the ~~current~~ level in effect if this legislation is passed. A lowered ~~tax~~ rate now could mean a lowered ~~tax~~ rate for several years in the future, seriously depriving the town of much needed revenue. (This is the SB 90 school tax concept.)
4. In three or four years Los Altos Hills building will diminish considerably as for all practical purposes the Town will have been built unless (Heaven forbid!) our zoning is broken. Related revenues will likewise diminish.
5. Public works (roads, drainage, paths, open space) projects must continue and must be funded. ~~This expenditure will not be reduced.~~

TOWN ROAD AND PATHWAY EQUIPMENT STORAGE AREA:

Council is considering which of three proposed locations the Town road and pathway equipment storage and maintenance facilities will be permanently housed. Each location has its inherent advantages and disadvantages, but a final decision is expected shortly. To maintain our 55 miles of roads the Town currently owns: 1 two-ton dump truck, a newly acquired 5 ton bobtail truck, a $\frac{3}{4}$ ton pickup, a Toyota pickup, a loader/backhoe, a brush chipper, a beam sprayer, a roller with trailer, an emulsion sprayer, a pavement breaker, a paint striper, a plate compactor and numerous small tools. To use this equipment, keeping our roads and paths in condition, the Town employs a crew of four maintenance men.